

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

St. Paul's Chapel

AND/OR COMMON

St. Paul's Chapel

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Broadway between Fulton and Vesey Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

New York

— VICINITY OF

19th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New York

36

New York

061

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

— DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

— STRUCTURE

— SITE

— OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

— PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

— BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

— IN PROCESS

— BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

— UNOCCUPIED

— WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

— YES: UNRESTRICTED

— NO

## PRESENT USE

— AGRICULTURE

— MUSEUM

— COMMERCIAL

— PARK

— EDUCATIONAL

— PRIVATE RESIDENCE

— ENTERTAINMENT ☒ RELIGIOUS

— GOVERNMENT

— SCIENTIFIC

— INDUSTRIAL

— TRANSPORTATION

— MILITARY

— OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Corporation of Trinity Church

STREET &amp; NUMBER

74 Trinity Place

CITY, TOWN

New York

— VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New York County Hall of Records

STREET &amp; NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey - 37 photographs

DATE

1937

☒ FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Paul's Chapel was designed by the Scottish architect, Thomas McBean, a student of James Gibbs of London. It was located to face the river with its back to Broadway. The east porch was added three years later as a concession to the busy street. The chapel closely follows James Gibbs' famous St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in London. When the steeple was designed 28 years later by the American architect James Crommelin Lawrence, he followed the lines of the Gibbs' London church steeple.

St. Paul's is built of rough-dressed local stone cut in small blocks. The windows are framed in brownstone and the corners are reinforced by sandstone quoins as are the entrance doors, one on either side of the large central Palladian window. Four giant fluted Ionic columns of sandstone support the pedimented portico at the east end. These are more widely spaced in the center to frame rather than block the central feature of the Palladian window. Above the modillioned cornice, a heavy balustrade, well proportioned to the whole, adds needed height to the sides so they visually blend with the east pediment and west tower.

The spire rises 220 feet in a truly soaring graceful form. Although dwarfed today by New York skyscrapers, it manages to maintain this impression by the proportions of its individual parts and its relationship to the building as a whole.

The interior of the church displays the same mastery of scale and space composition. The fluted columns at the sides are raised on pedestals and engaged against the gallery fronts as is common in churches of this period, but the Corinthian order of the capitals is of an unusually extravagant nature. The interior space is united by the fully vaulted ceiling which flows from the central elliptical arch to the interpenetrations of the gallery vaults.

The Palladian window of the chancel is framed by an elliptical arch which echoes the prominently keystone arch between the nave and chancel. The window itself serves to frame the altar with its railing and the Glory, designed by Major L'Enfant. It represents Mt. Sinai in clouds and lightning, the Hebrew word for God, in a triangle and the two Tablets of the Law with the Ten Commandments. This glory was erected to conceal the monument of General Richard Montgomery, buried beneath the east porch of the chapel, which could be seen through the Palladian window. The marble monument was ordered by Congress in 1776 and carved by the Italian sculptor, Jaques Caffieri. Above the Glory at the center of the arch around the window is an elaborate baroque cartouche of carved wood, gold leafed with the Hebrew word for God in red and gold rays.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

### PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC  
☐ 1400-1499  
☐ 1500-1599  
☐ 1600-1699  
☒ 1700-1799  
☐ 1800-1899  
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  
☐ AGRICULTURE  
☒ ARCHITECTURE  
☐ ART  
☐ COMMERCE  
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING  
☐ CONSERVATION  
☐ ECONOMICS  
☐ EDUCATION  
☐ ENGINEERING  
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
☐ INDUSTRY  
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
☐ LAW  
☐ LITERATURE  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSIC  
☐ PHILOSOPHY  
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION  
☐ SCIENCE  
☐ SCULPTURE  
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN  
☐ THEATER  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

### SPECIFIC DATES

1764-66

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Thomas McBean

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Paul's Chapel, built in stages between 1764 and 1796, is one of the two finest examples of Late Georgian church architecture in the United States. Its elegance is only equaled and perhaps surpassed by King's Chapel in Boston for its time period. St. Paul's Chapel is also New York City's sole surviving religious edifice of the pre-Revolutionary period and it represents that city's greatest architectural achievement prior to 1776.

### History

St. Paul's Chapel was established for the parish of Trinity Church. Construction on the main body began in 1764 and was completed in 1766. The spire was added in 1794-96. Since Trinity Church itself was destroyed in the fire of 1776, St. Paul's Chapel was used as the place of religious service following George Washington's inauguration in 1787. Funeral services for two Presidents, James Monroe in 1831 and William McKinley in 1901, have been held there.

The church was designed to face the river, which then came almost to the present Greenwich Street, with its back to Broadway. At the time, the vestry was criticized for planning so large and ornate a building in such a remote area. Today it is surrounded by skyscrapers which dwarf the building, giving it a miniature quality. The church has been in continuous service since its opening in 1766 with the exception of a period in 1950 when it was closed for structural restoration.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Burnham, Alan, Ed., New York Landmarks, Middletown, Connecticut, 1963.

Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture, New York, 1952.

Ware, William, Ed., The Georgian Period, 4 vols., Boston, 1902.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 118 583630 45106980  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                    
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                    
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D                    
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

St. Paul's Chapel is on Block 87, Lot 1 on the Tax Map for the Borough of Manhattan. The churchyard occupies the entire block bounded on the north by Vesey Street, on the east by Broadway, on the south by Fulton Street, and on the west by Church Street, using the near curb lines.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey

10/11/75

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. ((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

Boundary Certified:

*Henry J. Timmer*  
Nov. 22, 1977 date

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

St. Paul's Chapel

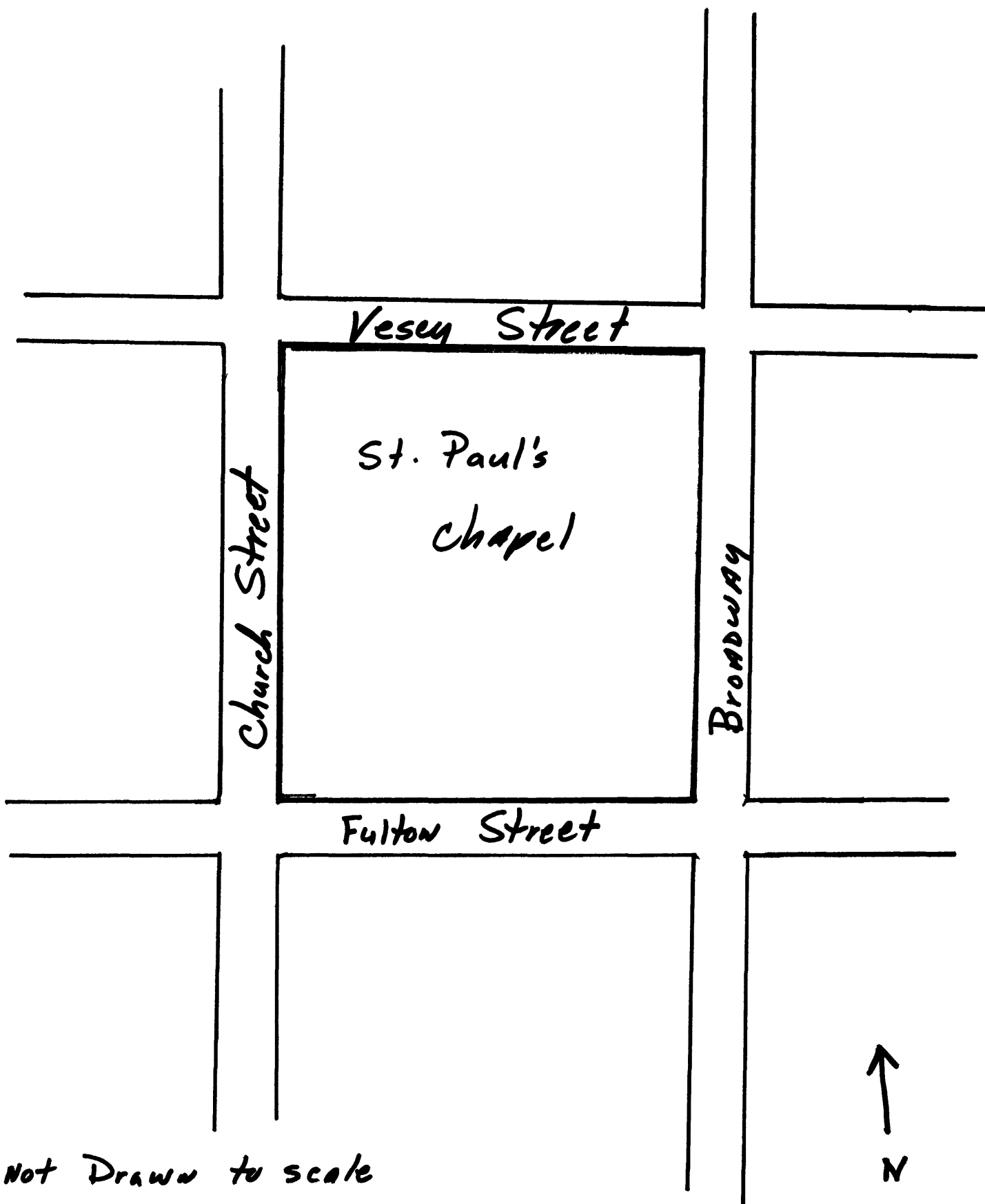
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The wineglass pulpit, with its sounding board is original to the building. It is elaborately carved and gold-leafed, surmounted by a coronet and six feathers, a survival of an emblem of British nobility. Fourteen original Waterford chandeliers, ordered for the Chapel in 1802, still hang in the nave and galleries. The organ case in the west gallery is mahogany, handcarved and built about 1804. The old box pews were removed in later renovations but a copy of the original floor plan exists. From this, the pew of George Washington has been reconstructed and put in place.

In 1950 St. Paul's Chapel was restored to its colonial appearance. The wooden spire was reinforced with steel and the interior of the church repainted and gilded.

Sketch map



Not Drawn to scale